

Angela Lake - HB 4798, 4799, 5134, 5182

From: "Melissa" <mamjane.2000@gmail.com>
To: <alake@house.mi.gov>
Date: 12/9/2011 6:36 AM
Subject: HB 4798, 4799, 5134, 5182
Attachments: HB 4799 + 5134.tiff



Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan
 P.O. Box 1315
 Grand Rapids, MI 49501

December 7, 2011

Dear Members of the Michigan House Families, Children, and Seniors Committee:

I write this letter on behalf of the Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan. The Progressive Women's Alliance (PWA) of West Michigan is a non-partisan organization that works to secure a just and socially responsible society. PWA strongly supports the right of privacy to make choices regarding reproduction. We are concerned about the impact of House Bills 4798, 4799, 5134, and 5182.

PWA believes women should NOT be coerced into or out of having an abortion and that all reproductive health choices should be freely made and well informed. This package of bills is redundant and confusing. Michigan's existing informed consent law already mandates that a woman's consent to an abortion must be "given freely and without coercion." These bills create an unnecessary, confusing, and unenforceable layer of oversight and enforcement upon doctors and their patients. These actions will insert fear into a woman's conversations with her doctor and medical providers.

These bills would mandate the role a doctor plays in a woman's decision-making process. Doctors would be mandated to provide women with information about contacting local law enforcement and domestic violence shelters. According to Planned Parenthood, eighty-three counties within Michigan lack abortion providers. This means many women travel a substantial distance to obtain these medical services. Would doctors be required to provide women with resources back in the woman's local area? Is this information available to all doctors throughout Michigan? Will the State compile this information and distribute it to all medical facilities and practitioners? The Legislature needs to provide clarity to this issue in order to ensure that the burden is not placed on individual doctors to research and compile the contact information for local law enforcement and domestic violence shelters. Doctors should not be required to act as police investigators and lawyers instead of focusing on providing women's health care. Legal culpability should be placed on those who may actually coerce a woman, not on a doctor who has no reasonable way of knowing of the coercion.

If it is the goal of the Michigan Legislature to reduce the number of abortions in Michigan, preventing unintended pregnancies should be its top priority. The Michigan Legislature needs to move forward commonsense policies that would improve access for low-income women to reproductive and prenatal health care, expand insurance coverage of contraceptives, and provide abstinence-plus education to our young people.

By focusing on preventing unintended pregnancies, the Legislature could help to reduce the need for elective abortions in Michigan and accomplish everyone's goals. If the Legislature truly cares for the women of Michigan, the time has come to work together to find common ground solutions and prevent women from being faced with an unintended pregnancy.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and on behalf of our over 600 PWA members, I ask that you vote against HB 4798, HB 4799, HB 5134, and HB 5182.

Sincerely,

Melissa Janes

Chair, Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan

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